School: Children’s School Kindergarten

Philosophy:
• lab school based on theories and research in Developmental Psychology
• aligned with the guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for developmentally appropriate practice
• six learning goals; self-esteem & independence, interaction & cooperation, communication, discovery & exploration, physical capabilities, and artistic expression & appreciation
• focus on individualized approach emphasizing clear expectations and cooperation within consistent structures

Admissions Criteria:
• children must turn five by December 31, 2008
• children with fall birthdays will use the program as a pre-K and then go to kindergarten at an elementary school
• a non-refundable fee of $50.00 with application
• admission is based on space availability, with preference first given to siblings and then by date of application
• parents give written consent for their children to participate in all laboratory aspects of the program, including research being conducted by members of the Psychology Department
• for children new to the school, admission requires both a written teacher evaluation and a school visit (though no formal assessment is conducted)

Staff:
• administrative team includes a director, an assistant director, and an administrative coordinator
• kindergarten team includes two teachers and one assistant teacher
• teachers and administrators have many years of experience in education, bachelor's degree and often an advanced degree in early childhood education, psychology, or a related field.
• continued professional development (90 to 100 hours/year), plus direct connection to research
• communication with families via email and monthly newsletters
Program:
- Teachers use the six objectives as a flexible framework for planning learning experiences to promote the growth of each individual child via a process oriented approach.
- Continuum of developmental objectives reflects understanding of young children's natural developmental progression.
- Teachers prepare an engaging center-based learning environment for exploring a theme, such as birds, artists, or transportation.
- Monday – Thursdays from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM and Fridays from 8:30 to 11:10 AM (September through May)
- Supplemental activities include weekly cooking and gym classes.
- Optional summer camp program in June (one to four weeks, 4 hours per day).

Diversity:
- School strives to recruit a diverse student population, both ethnically and socioeconomically, to provide an enriched learning environment, a diverse subject pool for research, and broad experiences for psychology students and student teachers.

Resources:
- Spacious classroom suite with large playground.
- Maximum class size of 24 with staff ratio at all times of 1:12 but most times 1:8.
- Shared kitchen and children's library facilities.
- Use of Carnegie Mellon campus (gym, track, field trips to campus post office, etc.).
- Materials and snack fees used to provide school and classroom resources chosen by the teaching team.
- Cooperation and collaboration with therapists when necessary, but no in-house special services.
- Security system with video surveillance.

Family Impact:
- Participate in family activities (open house, family festival, graduation).
• join family committees (library, school pictures)
• meet with teacher to share information about the child’s school and home life (parent meeting plus fall and spring conferences)
• tuition, material and snack fees – by semester, two semesters in a school year
• bus service may be provided by school district of residence
Philosophy
- Discipline
- Abstract vs. Concrete Experiences
- School Policies
- Standardization vs. Individualization
- Competition vs. Cooperation
- Academic, Social, and Physical Goals

Admissions Criteria
- Age Cutoff
- Grades Available (K-8, K-12)
- Readiness Assessment Used

Staff
(teachers, aides, administrators, counselors, etc.)
- Leadership / Vision
- Individual vs. Team Teaching
- Who Plays What Roles?
- Handling Special Needs
- Teacher/Student Ratio
- Connection to Current Research
- Training
- Communication with Families

Program
- Required vs. Elective Courses
- Nature of Assessment
- Mixed Grouping vs. Ability Grouping
- Courses Offered / Curriculum
- Social Skills/Values
- College Admissions Record
- Separate Subjects vs. Themes across Subjects
- Reaction to Student/Parent Input and Concerns
- Emphasis on Independence, Cooperation, Creativity, and Critical Thinking

Diversity (staff and students)
- Gender
- Economics
- Race & Culture
- Religion

Resources
- Class Size
- Classroom Size / Atmosphere
- Supplies
- Library
- Referral for Special Services
- Cafeteria
- Safety
- Tutoring / Gifted or Special Education Support
- Gym, Auditorium
- Technology
- Playground, Playing Fields
- Neighborhood Resources
- Financial Aid
**Family Impact**
- Tuition & Fees
- Distance from home to school
- Schedule
- Transportation
- Parent Participation in the School